

Foreign aid regime and social movement organizations in Latin America: unilateralism, conditionality and the perspectives for domestic resource mobilization

El régimen de ayuda extranjera y las organizaciones de movimientos sociales en América Latina.

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyze the feasibility of a Domestic Resource Mobilization approach for the advancement of social movement causes in Latin America. Basically, the quest is focused on understanding whether Social Movement Organizations (SMO) operating in the region could mobilize the resources –funds and labor- of domestic *elite* instances in order to favor their beneficiary bases. This idea is contrasted with resource mobilization processes that privilege foreign political, financial and human transactions to advance social movement causes: basically, those inherent to the Foreign Aid Regime. Starting from an overview of the latter's principles, its overall effect in developing countries and specific impact in the performance of Latin American SMOs, the article further organizes theoretical and factual elements that provide a moderately positive perspective regarding the feasibility of a Domestic Resource Mobilization approach by non-profit organizations in Latin America.

Keywords: Resource Mobilization, Domestic Resource Mobilization, Social Movement Organization, Foreign Aid, Foreign Aid Regime.

Resumen: El objetivo principal de este artículo es analizar la viabilidad de un enfoque que enfatice la movilización de recursos domésticos, para el avance de las causas de movimientos sociales en América Latina. La búsqueda se concentra en entender si las Organizaciones de Movimientos Sociales (OMS) que operan en la región pueden movilizar los recursos –dinero y trabajo, principalmente- de sectores *élite* domésticos, para favorecer a sus beneficiarios. Esta idea es contrastada con procesos de movilización de recursos que privilegian transacciones con instancias políticas y financieras foráneas: básicamente, aquellas que son características del Régimen de Ayuda Extranjera. El artículo comienza con una reseña de este último; sus principios y efectos en los países en desarrollo, así como su impacto específico en la labor de las OMS en América Latina. Continúa con la presentación de categorías teóricas y datos que proveen una perspectiva moderadamente positiva con respecto a la viabilidad de un enfoque doméstico de movilización de recursos por parte de organizaciones sin ánimo de lucro en América Latina.

Palabras Clave: Movilización de Recursos, Movilización Doméstica de Recursos, Organizaciones de Movimientos Sociales, Ayuda Extranjera, Régimen de Ayuda Extranjera.

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Introduction

The earliest academic impulse driving the author towards a then obscure concept of Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) was informed by a transformational perspective: recent literature advances the idea of mobilizing domestic political and economic instances, and the resources these possess, in order to conduct philanthropic initiatives in Latin American countries and diminish the dependence of social movements and Social Movement Organizations (SMO) in decreasing foreign resources. The acknowledgement of a trend incited a search for comprehensive approaches that could frame a still uncertain research topic on resource mobilization by social movements in Latin America. Nevertheless, a detailed examination of available literature found an evident dispersion of concerns and terminologies that drifted away from integral perspectives: philanthropy, corporate responsibility, *lobbying*, volunteering, intersectoral alliances etc; all elements belonging to a new perspective in Latin America's non-profit practice but somehow loosely related to each other and missing a cohesive conceptual reference. How to account for novel domestic scenarios in resource mobilization and its effects in the outcomes of social movements?

This research starts off from the idea that a regularized interaction between SMOs, State institutions and economic *elites* is important for the advancement of social movement causes. The socially transformative capacities of National State and the funds and influence of wealthy sectors could and ought to play a major role in addressing the multifaceted social problematic endured by Latin America's societies. The concept of Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) comprises this thought, as it encapsulates initiatives SMOs conduct in order to obtain larger commitments from domestic actors in public and private sectors *vis-à-vis* the civil and social rights causes of social movements.

Historically, social movements in Latin America have not privileged institutional channels in order to advance their agendas. The preference of regular 'political activity'(Reed, 1999) mechanisms -litigation, the ballot- or other forms of interlocution with political systems was undermined, before democratic transitions, by authoritarian and/or populist regimes, opposed or negligent to the civil and social rights causes of social movements. Although cooptation of movement's causes by the State has been common -to placate major social unrest- persecution and marginalization marked the environment of organized social movement action. In the other hand, the virtual inexistence of non-religious philanthropy attested to the marginal status of social movements in the region. Charity allocations of funds and labor, carried on by Latin America's wealthiest segments of society, were rarely destined to social movements which upheld perceived 'subversive' causes, such as labor or women's rights. The Catholic Church and other religious organizations monopolized such contributions.

As a response to political and financial marginalization, social movements and their organized manifestations, the Social Movement Organizations, have resorted to two main expedients: first, public protest with a tendency to radicalization and violent organized action²; second, the appeal to foreign

financial and political instances to sustain their operations, make demands visible and gain domestic legitimacy. The mainstream financial and political domestic institutions of Latin America's countries were, forcibly, circumvented by social movements in search of allies or partners to advance their causes.

Nevertheless, the political and financial contexts in which SMOs operate have significantly changed in the last 20 years: transitions to democratic rule in Latin America, beginning in the late 70s and still consolidating, have opened new spaces for social participation within juristic or institutional frameworks, including the basic but nonetheless fundamental legalization of NGOs and SMOs in various of the region's countries (Thompson, 2002). Several social organizations seemed to have taken advantage of this situation, consistently approaching the State to engage with it in different kinds of partnerships and other forms of dialogue, in order to carry out social development initiatives. Domestic philanthropy, in the other hand, is experiencing a noticeable surge, partially explained by the relative estrangement of social causes from ideological dogmas but also by the modernization of productive and industrial sectors in the region.

The conditions seem given for SMOs operating in Latin America to sought the alignment of the State and of domestic economic *elites*, within institutional means, to their causes: the fact that foreign aid allocations, both to States and Third Sector organizations, show a downward trend regarding Latin America adds to this assertion. Nonetheless, SMOs continue to heavily rely on foreign organizations and States and in the resources these provide. A trend towards combined institutional and non-institutional action is also perceivable, at least in the case of prominent SMOs such as the Movement of Landless Workers (MTST) of Brazil, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities in Ecuador or the Piquetero Movement in Argentina (Contesse, 2004).

The article argues for a complementary approach to resource mobilization that also takes into account domestic resources in Latin America; foreign resources are still fundamental for the work of SMOs in the region and they cannot and will not be disregarded even if new horizons display for DRM. Nonetheless, it is pointed out that the possibility of mobilizing domestic resources open up spaces for autonomous action for SMOs and engages larger segments of national societies and States in social movement causes.

Foreign Aid Regime: motives, principles and domestic impact

Motives

It is relevant to evoke that the ethical-rhetorical principle of foreign aid is to assist and help those in need; to show concern, compassion and solidarity in all levels for whomever might require these due to long-standing or juncture grievances. Some authors even point out the fundamentally humanitarian motivation of foreign aid:

"[...] the essential causes (of foreign aid) lay in the humanitarian and egalitarian principles of the donor countries, and in their implicit belief that

only on the basis of a just international order in which all States had a chance to do well was peace and prosperity possible" (Lumsdaine, 1993:30)

Nevertheless, an important academic sector underlines how the notions of aid, assistance, collaboration, humanitarianism, in international politics, all the same whilst seemingly emanating from merely altruistic manifestations of modern Western societies, are deeply embedded in concrete utilitarian impulses and strategic agendas.

'[...] is the pattern of aid flows dictated by political and strategic considerations which have little to do with rewarding good policies and helping the more efficient and less corrupt regimes in developing countries?' (Alesina & Dollar, 2000:3).

Several studies have concluded that aid giving patterns are mainly dictated by political and strategic considerations. Whereas there might be a minority of donors responding to certain notions of "correctness" in international relations – such as the Nordic countries, The Netherlands and Canada, which compose a non-conforming aid sub-regime traditionally focused on civil rights promotion and poverty issues (Sogge, 2002: 40) – there is a substantially larger portion of aid initiatives and mechanisms that respond to political and geo strategic calculations. Aid as an instrument of foreign policy assists in widening geo political spheres of influence, undermining recipient's political autonomy and consequently reducing its maneuvering space vis-à-vis foreign ideas and capital. Aid's role in foreign policy and in deepening recipient's dependency and vulnerability towards foreign financial assaults can be traced back to fairly well-known colonial or neo colonial doctrines:

The British Dual Mandate in Africa and Asia, which originated from Britain's secular colonial rule in large areas of these continents, aiming at normalizing subordination under paternalistic assumptions: assisting or aiding the colonies for future self-reliance. A toned-down evolution of this concept can be perceived in the constitution of the British Commonwealth of Nations (Sogge, 2002).

The United State's Good Neighbor policy during World War II, Alliance for Progress in the 60s and 70s and National Security doctrine in the late 70s and 80s, all focused in Latin America and all comprising an important percentage of technical and financial assistance, advancing USA's geo-strategic domination of the Western Hemisphere and accounting little for recipient's democratic record. Also, its pattern of aid giving in the Middle-East is and has been clearly driven by a geo-strategic mandate (Alesina and Dollar, 2000).

France's mission civilisatrice indoctrinated its imperial exercise in the 19th century: '[colonial] administrators regarded themselves as children of the Enlightenment embarked upon a crusade to improve the lives of what they saw as the backward and oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Pacific' (Groff, 1999:488) In the post – colonial rule era, France directed its aid flows mainly to its previous overseas possessions, in order to maintain a vast sphere of influence granting it a voice in world's geo politics.

On the other hand, major multi lateral aid institutions advance the world's strongest economies interests. The Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) implemented by the World Bank(WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), condition the issuing of new loans or the attainment of lower interest rates in existing loans to policy changes in recipient countries. These often include profound and far-reaching transformations which end up benefiting, directly or indirectly, developed countries' productive sectors: cutting social expenditures or 'austerity' measures; trade liberalization, namely lifting import and export restrictions; opening of domestic stock markets; balancing budgets and not overspending; removing price controls and state subsidies; privatization, or divestiture of all or part of state-owned enterprises and enhancing the rights of foreign investors vis-à-vis national laws (Townson University, 1998).

These measures empower foreign capital and financial systems as well as distort accountability in aid-recipient countries: besides the obvious economic benefits for the strongest economies –the main bilateral aid providers– as they expand markets and fuel their national productions there are significant political implications as the recipient, following the same upward line of obligations to multi lateral aid institutions, finds itself rendering accounts of governmental performance to single aid powers. It should be noticed that a number of bi lateral donor agencies, such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID) also require reform measures along the lines of those prescribed in the SAPs and in a broader context those contained in the conceptual framework of the 'Washington Consensus' (Sogge, 2002:73).

The multi lateral banks, basically the most important players of the Aid industry -alongside with the United States- do not push draconian macroeconomic reforms in recipient countries in order to *donate* or award resources: the capital is *lent* and excruciatingly paid for. In 1999 '[...] lower income countries had paid to creditors almost five times more than what they received in aid grants' (Sogge, 2002:35). Reformist efforts so far have not proved themselves sufficient to hold these interests accountable or to truly empower recipient countries and societies in the aid regime. Besides all the catch phrases made for foreign aid, there might be a truthful claim for it: 'Perhaps the safest generalization to make is that foreign aid, when used alone or in combination with other policy instruments, has a unique ability to allow the donor to demonstrate compassion while simultaneously pursuing a variety of other objectives' (Arase, 1995:13).

Principles

Now, these agendas influence and are shaped too by power and domination discourses and are regulated by certain principles and implicit or explicit rules. Regarding the former, it has been already mentioned how Aid has sustained imperial and colonialist discourses making them appear as patronage or apprenticeship enterprises. Aid has been a key notion in the construction of a wider discourse of development that has legitimized domination:

The construction of discourse under conditions of unequal power [...] entails specific constructions of the colonial / Third World subject in/through discourses

in ways that allows the exercise of power over it' (Escobar, 1995:9) '[...] the development discourse is governed by the same principles (of the colonial discourse): it has created an extremely efficient apparatus for producing knowledge about, and the exercise of power over, the Third World' (Ibid:9).

In the specific context of the aid regime, many cases of recipient initiatives set up to afford some control over aid have been consistently blocked: the creation of the UN Fund for Economic Development was proposed by some recipient countries in the late fifties, with the idea of setting up a soft-loan bank for developing countries. The proposal was met with the opposition of the World Bank, which succeeded in its sabotage; later, the latter mainstreamed the idea with the setting up of its own soft – loan mechanism, the International Development Association (IDA) for the world's poorest countries. Other Southern ideas such as the Lagos Plan of Action, the Final Act of Lagos, the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programs and the proposal to create the Asian Monetary Fund have been bluntly opposed to by the aid establishment (Sogge, 2002: 68).

—| Box 1:

Six specific principles governing the foreign aid regime

Negotiation: there is none or minimum. The donor has almost total precedence over aid's provision.

Aid in relation to other flows: the donors use aid to promote or deter trade flows and investment capital.

Relations among official donors: they should not compete or promote rival economic paradigms.

Relations between official donors and civil society: interaction is limited to organizations sharing donor's ideas and methods.

Conditionality: the recipient countries should plead commitment to donor's policy instructions and demonstrate reform results in order to be considered for aid.

Aid and Debt: recipient countries should meet debt repayments for continued aid eligibility.
(Sogge, 2002:60-61)

Domestic Impact

Foreign aid's impact at the domestic level is multifaceted and far-reaching; besides the potential positive impact of successful projects supported by foreign funds and expertise, there is a vast array of consequences oppositely at work regarding one of aid's rhetorical purposes since its patronage *époques*: to foster

recipient's self-reliance and capacities to carry on without donor intervention. There are many reasons for this, among them aid's role in advancing donor's power agendas and the concurrent action of subordinated Southern *elites*. Nonetheless, it has not been mentioned how the aid regime itself is fundamentally grounded in an expansionist dynamic that disregard interruption or phase-out: both donor and recipient aid establishments have to 'Move the Money' to sustain bureaucratic livelihoods, power enclaves and basically a whole public service industry based upon a continuing and increased flow of foreign resources (Sogge, 2002:89-90). Aid's success then appears to be irrelevant, as well as its failure. What truly matters is the ability to keep the funds flowing, even if that requires made-up project results, a privilege for action, spending and short-term outcomes instead of focus on learning and long term planning. Reflection and criticism are marginalized, as well as recipient's initiatives to diminish aid-independency, because these are threats to the regime's existence.

'Countries that were self-sufficient in food crops at the end of World War II –many of them even exported food to industrialized nations- became net food importers throughout the development era. Hunger similarly grew as the capacity of countries to produce the food necessary to feed themselves contracted under the pressure to produce cash crops (and) accept cheap food from the West [...]' (Escobar, 1995:104).

Aid, as part of a larger development discourse and practice, seriously undermines the coping mechanisms set in place by its targeted societies. In an economic dimension, aid basically produces a 'drain of public revenues, as priority goes to debt repayment and the running costs of aid-financed investments (and a) reduced tax effort and reduced revenue self-reliance' (Sogge, 2002:100) In a political dimension, aid debilitates an accountable interaction among citizens, civil society organizations and national governments in various areas of public policy formulation and implementation -such as poverty eradication (Hermele, 2005). Aid-dependency weakens and de legitimizes the pursuit of serious tax policies by governments or Domestic Resource Mobilization strategies by NGOs. Resource mobilization is left to invisible, closed and unaccountable decision-making schemes when foreign aid is in command or has a powerful say. Government's responsibilities begin to reside upwards in the aid chain and it begins to lose negotiation muscle regarding trade, investment and many other sovereign interests.

Foreign Aid and SMOs in Latin America

In the specific case of Latin America, the principle of conditionality appears to be decisive to explain, not only the aid allocation schemes that are in place among recipient States and foreign donor institutions, but also those which SMOs privilege and are involved in. The relationship between foreign donors and the SMOs or NGOs in the period before democratic transitions and worldwide market liberalization had very different contours compared to the current one: the main multilateral donors (The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) focused their resources on State-driven aid and structural State reform and minimized emphasis on poverty reduction issues, a trend that has been

recently changing³. This limited the access of SMOs working on rights-oriented issues to multilateral resources (Villaboas et al., 2004). Consequently, private aid transfers, mainly from Northern to Latin American SMOs (including within the latter concept Northern SMOs working in the region) dominated the non-profit resource mobilization scene (Villaboas et al., 2004). The conditions attached to private North-Latin America aid allocations, in the SMO context, were not as stringent as the ones imposed by multilateral or bilateral donors on States and Governments: SMOs had a relatively broad maneuvering room to access foreign resources based on own problem assessments and agenda definitions (Villaboas et al., 2004). The situation has substantially changed. SMOs operating in Latin America mobilize resources from a varied array of foreign institutions and organizations and, increasingly, from domestic instances. SMOs are subject to Northern conditionality, imposed by now accessible multilateral institutions⁴ or by Northern SMOs. Three main transformations have modified the scenario: worldwide market reforms, decreasing or re allocated aid resources and democratic transitions. The first issue is basically referred to the expansion of free market and business logics into non-profit terrain and its effect on North – South SMO cooperation:

'[Northern SMOs] institutional imperatives of growth, size, and market share tend to outweigh the developmental imperatives of partnership and cooperation, especially in winning contracts for the provision of humanitarian assistance, which are central to the continued survival of most international NGOs in their current form. These contracts pay for the infrastructure of the organization as a whole, but reduce the amount of room for maneuver in the agency's strategic choices. NGOs tend to import the philosophy of the market uncritically, treating development as a commodity, measuring market share as success, and equating being professional in their work with being businesslike [...]' (Edwards, 1999:29).

Northern SMOs have had to subject to the toughened rules and conditions of national aid agencies –their foremost donors- in an environment of marketplace competition and stagnant private donations (Edwards, 1999:30). The retrenchment of the State due to market reforms might partially explain shrinking national aid budgets. This has driven SMOs to look for different instances from where to mobilize resources, namely multilateral aid institutions, with the consequent acceptance of their conditions.⁵ These new terms are translated to Southern and Latin American NGOs which, in order to access the resources have to comply with a large set of third-hand foreign-imposed terms. On the other hand, market reforms might have also triggered a general trend towards non-concessionary forms of international cooperation. The status and position of aid in international relations is being speedily replaced by free-trade and investment agreements (Edwards, 1999a) a trend that also explains a 'widespread decline in official aid budgets'⁶ (Edwards, 1999:26). The concentration of concessionary or subsidized resources to priority regions –namely Africa and some Asian countries- by bi lateral and multilateral donors has also affected Latin American States and SMOs (Vos et al., 2007) Nonetheless the latter seem to benefit from another kind of aid reallocations:

'Increasingly, however, aid is flowing directly to NGOs in Africa, Asia, and Latin America rather than passing through traditional northern NGO intermediaries [this trend] has been accelerated by the desire of bilateral and multilateral aid agencies to decentralize their operations, and by increasing question marks about the value added by northern NGOs in the transfer of funds [...] Because the use of northern intermediaries raises the transactions costs of aid delivery, why pay their overheads when the money could be channeled more cost-effectively directly to the South?' (Edwards, 1999:27).

The preference of donor agencies for direct funding of Southern SMOs –avoiding Northern intermediation- is informed by a growing trust on the latter's built capacity and leading expertise (Edwards, 1999:27). In Latin America, the escalation of *organized* social movement action (Kaimowitz, 1992) and the availability for non-profits of professional resources (qualified labor, for instance) with the advent of democracy could explain this shift. Now, this appears as a positive development but it could actually diminish the financial and programmatic autonomy of Latin American SMOs. Beyond the traditional resource intermediation Northern SMOs provided -filled up with conditions and preeminent foreign agendas- direct access to multilateral and bilateral donor's resources favors the collusion of Latin American SMOs with foreign aid regime's motives, principles and larger conditionality schemes.

'When foreign aid conditions were discussed in the 1970s, they usually referred mainly to adjustment programs from multilateral financial organizations, or related to donor governments imposing aid, with commercial and political strings attached, on Southern governments. More recently however, this policy of conditions has also become a frequent practice in official and private international cooperation processes involving Southern NGO, despite the proclaimed right to 'ownership' that official donors attribute to the South, and the discourse on South-North partnership insisted upon by Northern NGOs and foundations' (Valderrama, 2001:3) Latin American SMOs do not avoid this new trend: a recent research carried out among SMOs in the region (Villaboas et al., 2004) showed how conditionality has imposed itself over partnership and cooperation:

'[...] the results of this study were that conditionality is mostly imposed in three areas:

- a. Agendas and priority issues;
- b. Location focus;
- c. Programming, monitoring and evaluation and accountability systems [...]' (Reality of Aid Report, 2004:3).

Regarding the first issues, the consulted sources –SMOs in Brazil, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Perú- argued that foreign-designed agendas were often imposed, without further discussion, by international donors. Priorities within these agendas are also set from the outside, being certain themes –such as gender equality or environmental protection- first on the list (Villaboas et al., 2004:4) Moreover,

the parameters to be followed in order to address these agendas are also largely responding to foreign terms of engagement (Valderrama, 2001:7). The issue of location or geo-political emphasis of operations falls within the same sphere of pre-set priorities. Also, conditions are added to the thematic impositions. They regard to project planning, monitoring and evaluation:

'[...] one of the areas in which northern NGOs impose conditionality more forcefully is in requirements of a formal nature: forms; planning; monitoring and evaluation - PME - systems; accountability; indicators; etc. In Guatemala, the Programming Monitoring-Evaluation system induced from the North has proven to contribute positively to sorting out project management. The problem is that it has been imposed as a universal model and the only planning tool. The logical frame does not adequately contemplate what the project means to the community. There is the added inconvenience that the planning system offers little flexibility in adapting it to specific contexts, which often change.' (Villaboas et al., 2004:8).

The new emphasis on administration, quantifiable results, short-termed project-oriented funding and '[...] the disappearance of the concept of programs and the return of that of contracts [...]' (Villaboas et al, 2004:8) has not only resulted in weakening the independence of Latin American and Southern SMOs in general; it has affected an adequate regard of their local expertise and reality assessment. Now, what is perhaps ultimately significant is that this trend deviates time, resources and focus from those which cooperation is supposed to assist- the poor and excluded. The accountability processes run, once more, upward to invisible instances strange to local realities. '[...] unlike in the past when there were attempts to establish a dialog on agendas and forms of cooperation, decisions are now increasingly made in the North with the message to "take it or leave it", implying a philosophy of "those who pay call the shots." [...]' (Valderrama, 2001:3).

Perspectives for a DRM approach in Latin America

Resource mobilization, in the context of this article, is defined as the series of strategies and initiatives carried out by Social Movement Organizations in order to channel resources for the advancement of its causes (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). The concept of cause refers to the demands and/or needs the organizations aims to articulate and/or satisfy, and the constituency from where these arise⁷. The concept of resources is equaled to funds and labor drawn from third parties to the SMOs or to the causes the SMOs are advancing (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

The concept of Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) refers to resource mobilization processes carried out within delimited national, regional, provincial, municipal and community levels. It differs from mere resource mobilization as it focuses its span to resources made available at any intra-societal dimension in modern Nation-States. For this article, the domestic specificity of resource mobilization is relevant as it marks contrasts with resource mobilization processes inherent to the foreign aid regime, in terms of autonomy for Latin American SMOs.

In Latin America, SMOs have traditionally resorted to foreign resources, provided by international SMOs, NGOs, multilateral organizations, foreign States and individuals (Villaboas et al., 2004). Historically, domestic political and economic instances have been bypassed. Why? SMOs have been historically marginalized and persecuted in the region by authoritarian regimes (Landim & Thompson, 1997). The appeal to mainstream political and economic resources by SMOs was thus heavily constrained. Public authorities and economic *elites* in non-democratic regimes were negligent or antagonistic of social movement causes, if these were compromised with social and political change. This complicated or simply impeded mobilizing the resources that these instances control and that could be channeled by the SMOs, a fact that partially explained a heavy reliance of Latin American SMOs in foreign aid (Grugel, 2000; Aldaba et al 2000) A relatively recent transition to democracy in the region improves the chances to mobilize *enclave* establishment resources.

A group of theories on social movements define two minimums for social movements and SMOs to carry out resource mobilization: State's tolerance or favorability to the social movement cause and the existence of discretionary resources in society. Also, the Resource Mobilization theories prescribe the active quest for such favorability and discretionary resources, as the soundest strategy to advance a social movement cause. Thus an *elitist* approach to social activism is privileged. Popular protest and massive demonstrations -and other types of mobilizations aiming to generate changes in *status quos*- might not render concrete results if they are not endorsed by a 'normalized' interaction between vanguard social organizations and political and economic establishments (Jenkins 1983; Kitschelt 1986).

In Latin America, an approach to resource mobilization that usufructs the national economic, political and public opinion environments in which the SMOs are embedded, could avoid or at least diminish the preeminence of foreign conditions and agendas. It could also attribute broader autonomy to SMOs and engage traditionally negligent (and influential) domestic actors in social movement causes. A common sense idea, apparently: but if the exercise of political power and the social and civil rights situation in Latin America are taken into account, it might claim a relative novelty.

Authoritarianism, often materialized in military rule, swept through Latin America since the 1960s. This generated a transition from a populist, corporatist style to a period of brutal repression of societal organizations working for civil, social and political rights. (Landim & Thompson, 1997:345). During this period human rights were violated in a systematic manner. Towards the end of the 1970s, an important group of Latin American countries were still governed by authoritarian regimes. Exceptions could be found in the Andean region, where Colombia stands out for its formal democratic stability in spite of a long-lasting armed conflict; Venezuela, which witnessed the withdrawal of the military from government since the end of the 1950s and Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador which made the transition from military rule in the early to mid 1970s. Nevertheless, the Southern cone of the continent experienced the transitions between the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s and Central American countries

gave way to the resolution of their high-intensity internal conflicts during the early 1990s (UNDP, 2005: 78-79).

The SMOs working for human rights in Latin America were –and still are to a lesser degree in certain countries– consistently sabotaged, marginalized, persecuted or plainly illegalized by authoritarian rulers. Mobilization of domestic political, economic and public opinion instances for a social movement cause was bluntly out of the question, when powerful sectors fundamentally antagonized the SMOs and their agendas (and perhaps any alterations to the *status-quo*). The transition to democracy and radical economic liberalization in Latin America since the 1980s are factors that have drastically widened the range of action for SMOs and, effectively, the so-called Third Sector is blooming in the region (Sorj and De Oliveira, 2007).

The electoral aspects of a democratic political system have been sufficiently observed by Latin American countries during the period 1990-2002 fulfilling the minimum, operational–level requisites of democracy (UNDP, 2005): elected public authorities; universal suffrage; free and fair elections; the right to contest for public office; freedom of expression; access to pluralist information; freedom of association; respect for mandates; a territory that clearly defines the voting *demos* (Dahl, 1971). With all the limitations these categories present in practice, they represent a major advance for the region and constitute an adequate institutional environment for further reform (Sen, 1999) *Electoral citizenship* shows acceptable levels in Latin America. The problems arise when the region’s accomplishments in the field of *civil and social citizenships* are analyzed. Indicators present a very negative picture in that regard especially concerning the set of rights constituting the latter (UNDP, 2005). ‘For the first time in history, an entire developing region with profoundly unequal societies is, in its entirety, organized politically under democratic governments. Thus a new and unprecedented situation has emerged in Latin America: the coexistence of democracy, poverty and inequality’ (UNDP, 2005:39). The concurrence of democracy, poverty and inequality is frequent in other regions but unique in this context if it is taken into account that Latin America has a high level of poverty and the highest level of inequality in the world (UNDP, 2005). A contradictory picture of Latin America emerges then, where democratic electoral rights and mechanisms are enforced and functioning at acceptable levels but civil and social rights are largely unattended by the State.

The SMOs are now legalized and to larger extents legitimized in public opinion. State’s shrinking welfare role has multiplied their opportunities as basic services providers. Public institutions and officials are now subject to electoral processes, constitutional mandates and increasing accountability mechanisms. Therefore the mobilization potential of State’s resources for the SMOs’ social agendas is concrete. Also, economic *elites* and productive sectors are faced with public debate around their ‘social responsibility’ role. This trend makes wealthy segments of population prone to assign resources for philanthropic initiatives. If a scenario of reduced or heavily conditioned foreign aid flows is also considered, it is arguably that the current is an appropriate conjuncture for

a DRM approach. Now, the political environment for advancing social movement causes at a domestic level is certainly improving but, could SMOs sustain their operations with domestic resources? Are not Latin America's financially poor countries? The categorization made by the World Bank based on *per-capita* income indicators might illustrate the point.

The stratification of countries based in *per-capita* annual income was first established by the World Bank (WB) to classify world economies based on their lending capabilities. In the latest update, these categories were constituted as follows: low income, US\$905 or less; lower middle income, US\$906 - US\$3,595; upper middle income, US\$3,596 - US\$11,115; and high income, US\$11,116 or more (WB, 2008). These categories -not the ciphers or figures- do not respond to cross-sector and cross-country data analysis regarding international purchasing standards of primary goods and services, although at least there is a broad consensus in the revised literature as to which are the levels of income attached to worldwide poverty and extreme poverty (DFID, 2004; ODI, 2004; WB 2008a). Basically, income and countries are categorized by the World Bank as both are contrasted with internal criteria regarding debt-repayment capabilities or creditworthiness (IDA, 2008) of potential loan recipients. Thus an annual *per-capita* national income of US\$905, example given, does not qualifies a country as low-income because its inhabitants cannot access to certain basic goods and services – which might as well be the case- but as it does not matches minimum debt-repayment safeguards in order for the World Bank to authorize issuing or reissuing loans.

The starting number for loan eligibility is US\$1065 *per-capita* income in 2006 (WB, 2008): within less than that figure fall all economies eligible for IDA (International Development Association, a dependence of the World Bank) lending, which is characterized for its mainly concessional and interest-free terms (WB, 2008). Starting at that figure and plus, all the countries with sufficient resources to duly respond to creditors are included. Middle income countries are within this 'eligible' lending category for the main multilateral bank and foremost actor of the aid regime, the World Bank. This might not by itself be sufficient to characterize these countries' wealth but at least indicates that resources exist there sufficiently as to be compromised for mediate financial transactions that, eventually, might double its original figure (Sogge, 2002). All Latin American countries fall within the categorizations of lower or upper middle-income countries, according to the World Bank (WB, 2008). Also, reports point out to a significant increase of (concentrated) wealth in the region for 2007 – a 23.2% rise in individuals holding more than 1 million in financial assets (World Wealth Report, 2007).

Consequently, evidence suggests that Latin American countries are neither structurally poor nor devoid of capital resources but characterized by an extremely unequal income distribution. Interpreting and acting upon the new political and financial scenarios, several SMOs have succeeded in mobilizing their constituencies, large sectors of public opinion and the media and in accomplishing certain social and civil rights gains. The most notorious being the indigenous movements in

the Andean countries which, through large public manifestations, have managed to deeply influence electoral outcomes and have played a crucial role in recent institutional crises (Sorj and De Oliveira, 2007).

Conclusions

The principles and motives of the foreign aid regime, as well as its impacts in developing countries, have been analyzed in the first part of this article. Based on the reviewed literature, a general conclusion was reached for each one of the aforementioned aspects: first, the motives of aid are occasionally humanitarian and consistently strategic; second, its principles enthrone donors' agendas and relegate the perspective of aid-recipients; and third, it might obstruct autonomous responses to domestic issues in developing countries, generating cycles of dependency, for instance, in the form of debt repayment or foreign grant-seeking. On the other hand, different authors and organizations endorse the regime, its necessity and altruistic dynamic (Lumsdaine 1990) as well as underline its results.

Regardless of all the evidence against or in favor of foreign aid, a single idea is shared, at least rhetorically, by most of its actors and commentators: be it in its most sporadic forms -relief for natural or humanitarian calamities; assistance for post-war reconstruction- or in its institutionalized manifestations -Overseas Development Assistance from industrialized to developing countries and World Bank's lending, for instance- foreign aid is meant to constitute a transitory regime. It represents an extraordinary intervention of foreign actors in national agendas. In an ideal world-scenario, foreign aid would be a finite phenomenon: every country and society should be able to subsist and develop its potentials autonomously; to address its problems and attend its people's demands in an independent manner. The initiatives aimed at encountering non-assisted paths to 'development' or at least at diminishing aid's prevalence, mostly at the recipient end of aid, are thus relevant and significant.

Strictly following the conceptual premises of the Resource Mobilization theories, the minimum conditions exist in Latin America for the implementation of a DRM approach by social movements: first, the existence of discretionary or *elite* resources, possessed by wealthy segments of population that concentrate the highest proportion of gross national incomes; and second, the incumbency of political regimes that in the least positive scenario, would tolerate social movement activism; this is, the democratic systems that are consolidating in Latin America.

It can be stated that an approach that usufructs the national economic, political and public opinion environments in which the SMOs are embedded, for the achievement of its social and civil rights goals is at least possible. The transition to democracy and radical economic liberalization in Latin America since the 1980s are factors that have drastically widened the range of action for SMOs and, effectively, the so-called Third Sector is blooming in the region (Sorj and De Oliveira., 2007). The SMOs are now legalized and to larger extents legitimized in public opinion. State's shrinking welfare role has multiplied their opportunities as basic services providers. Public institutions and officials are now subject to electoral processes, constitutional mandates and strengthened accountability mechanisms.

Therefore the mobilization potential of institutional resources for the SMOs' social agendas is concrete. Economic elites and the productive sector are faced also with public debate around their 'social responsibility' role in these highly unequal contexts. This trend makes wealthy segments of population prone to assign resources for philanthropic initiatives. If a scenario of reduced or heavily conditioned foreign aid flows is also considered, it is arguably that the current is an appropriate conjuncture for Domestic Resource Mobilization.

Notas y Citas

- (1) SMOs are organizations belonging to a specific social movement and sharing its basic concerns and causes (McCarthy & Zald 1977). The social movement and the cause of civil rights are, for instance, constituted by different SMOs that work to advance the cause.
- (2) For instance, the transformation of peasant and indigenous movements in Colombia into Guerrilla organizations; the radicalization of opposition groups in the southern cone of South America and their transformation into urban militias (Wickham-Crowley 1994).
- (3) Bonsdorff & Voipio (2005).
- (4) Bonsdorff & Voipio (2005) and Hermele (2004) analyze the recent shift of World Bank's programs towards poverty reduction and civil society participation.
- (5) '[Northern SMOs] frequently adopted the viewpoint of the World Bank and other official agencies. As a result, they took on projects of a more social-assistance nature, or spearheaded massive humanitarian aid programs in situations of social emergency, in order to obtain funding. In that sense, an instrumental rationale has been consolidating itself in the North regarding the fight against poverty[...]' (Reality Of Aid Report, 2004).
- (6) Evidence pointing out to decreasing foreign aid global flows is also found in: (Edwards et al., 1999b); (World Bank, 1998); (Aldaba et al, 2000); (Smillie and Helmich, 1993).
- (7) As an example: Plan International, an international NGO focused on promoting children's welfare worldwide would be denominated, in the context of this article, as an organization belonging to the social movement that protects the rights of children. The cause that it aims to advance is that of children rights and its constituency the world's infants.

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